

Volume 11: Issue 20  
August 13 - 26, 2014

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# Street Sense



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#### COVER ART

Finding time for summer reading.  
ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID SEROTA

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#### OUR STORY

Street Sense began in August 2003 after Laura Thompson Osuri and Ted Henson approached the National Coalition for the Homeless on separate occasions with the idea to start a street paper in Washington, D.C.

Through the work of dedicated volunteers, Street Sense published its first issue in November 2003. In 2005, Street Sense achieved 501 (c) 3 status as a nonprofit organization, formed a board of directors and hired a full-time executive director.

Today, Street Sense is published every two weeks through the efforts of four salaried employees, more than 100 active vendors, and dozens of volunteers. Nearly 30,000 copies are in circulation each month.

# How It Works

Each vendor functions as an independent contractor for Street Sense. That means he or she reinvests in the organization with every purchase.

Vendors purchase the paper for 50 cents/issue, which will then be sold to you for a suggested donation of \$2.

**75%**

75% supports the vendors helping them overcome homelessness and poverty.

&

**25%**

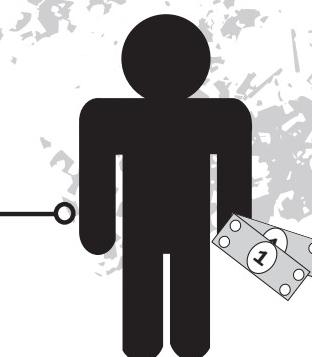
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2. I will only purchase the paper from Street Sense staff and volunteers and will not sell papers to other vendors.
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# Helping Homeless Youth Find Their Way Home

By Rachel Cain  
Editorial Intern

Homeless youth hide themselves in plain sight. They are constantly mobile, riding on the subway or the bus, walking, trying to make it to school or work or just through another day. Although we may not always be aware of homeless children and teens, research shows they account for 40 percent of the entire homeless population in the United States.

"Almost Home: Helping Kids Move from Homelessness to Hope," by Kevin Ryan and Tina Kelley, strives to make homeless young people more visible by telling the stories of six homeless youth who all turned to the Covenant House for support and relief.

***The narratives in this book may break your heart, but they will also compel you to take action against the injustices that cause homelessness.***

Founded in 1972, the Covenant House has several locations throughout the Americas where they provide assistance for homeless, runaway and trafficked youth.

One of the young people featured in this book is Benjamin. He experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse from his father and foster parents. When

he turned 18 and graduated out of the foster care system, his last foster mother brought him to the Covenant House. There, gradually, he began to trust adults again. The Covenant House staff celebrated with him when he was accepted to college on a full football scholarship, but he was thrown out of college because of his anger management problems. Through the support of the Covenant House, he returned to college a second time, learned to manage his anger and other mental health problems and graduated. Benjamin now works as an at-risk coordinator at a middle school, supporting at-risk youth who came from living situations not too

organization serves lack high school diplomas, have lived in foster care, have experienced physical or sexual abuse and have been hospitalized for mental health issues. More than half of them come from families where someone used drugs regularly.

The book emphasizes that these young people land in difficult situations "through no fault of their own."

The profiles are interwoven with essays about the underlying social issues behind youth homelessness, including human trafficking, the foster care system and homophobia.

The narratives in this book may break your heart, but they will also compel you to take action against the injustices that cause homelessness. Although it is easy to feel helpless when faced with such need, the book inspires an indomitable spirit of perseverance and optimism by explaining what changes the government and social services need to make as well as what the reader can do as well, such as mentoring, anti-trafficking advocacy work, fighting

Helping Kids  
Move from  
Homelessness  
to Hope

## Almost Home

FOREWORD BY CORY BOOKER

Kevin Ryan  
President of Covenant House  
& Tina Kelley

homophobia or candlelight vigil for homeless youth. Even in the face of such tragic situations, "Almost Home" has a distinctly hopeful tone that situations can and will improve for homeless youth.

"Our message to kids: even if you can't go home again, because your parents are missing or dead or abusive or in jail or hate you for who you are, you are still valuable and special and deserve safe shelter. You still have the right to a future," write Ryan and Kelley. "We open our doors, and we promise safety. We want to help you find stability, and we want you to pursue your dreams."

**YES!** 

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# A Baltimore Sibling: Word on the Street

By Sarika Reddy  
Editorial Intern

Baltimore is rich with culture and character, yet poverty is also very much a fact of life in the city.

As in many other places the voices of marginalized people have not always been heard. Two years ago, a group of homeless people and advocates, including a formerly homeless man, Marc Schumann, banded together to change that.

Working on a shoestring, with help and support from the wider community, the group launched what is believed to be Baltimore's first street newspaper, Word on the Street.

Since then, the independent, non-profit, grassroots newspaper led by those experiencing homelessness and by their allies has pressed forward with its mission:

"to educate the community and expose the underlying causes of homelessness by highlighting the contributions of homeless and formerly homeless individuals while providing vendors with a source of income."

About 75 percent of the paper's content is written by those experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, with additional volunteers contributing the rest.

Healthcare for the Homeless, which operates a nationally-recognized clinic providing comprehensive care to the city's poorest residents, lent some office space to the paper when it was just getting started.

Since March 2013, Word on the Street has been located at 238 N Holliday Street in a temporary office space. The paper

expects to move to a permanent space at the same address in the fall.

Word on the Street has similar aspirations and goals as Washington, DC's eleven-year-old *Street Sense* and the rest of the roughly two dozen street newspapers across the country. The publications are typically no-frills operations, surviving on donations, small grants and the money vendors pay for the copies they go out and sell.

Yet after two years of survival, Word on the Street is still just eking out an existence, according to managing editor Damien Haussling.



A shot of Baltimore from the Word on the Street building

PHOTO BY SARIIKA REDDY



Former vendor Beryl James

PHOTO BY NICK MUTSCHLER



**The facade of the building where Word on the Street is housed.**

PHOTOS BY SARIIKA REDDY

"It has been a struggle," said Haussling, a formerly homeless District resident. Vendors are just not selling enough papers, he explained.

DC and Baltimore are fundamentally different cities, according to Haussling, and although Word on the Street has been relying upon a similar model of distributing through vendors, those involved with the paper are currently discussing other approaches. In the near future, the staff of Word on the Street will hold a retreat to discuss possible options such as selling subscriptions or memberships and/or paying a few members to deliver papers.

The paper faces another challenge.

Up until now, each issue has been visually designed by Towson University professor Jessica Ring and her students. But Ring will not be teaching her class next semester. Looking back on her tenure, Ring told the staff of Word on the Street that the experience of working with them was "life-changing" for the students.

The next issue will be the first to be done without her help. Fortunately, several former students have stepped up to take on the responsibility of the newspaper's layout.

Word on the Street remains a quarter-

ly newspaper and, while staff members would like to publish more frequently, they currently lack the means. All staffers remain volunteers; some, according to Haussling, "are doing something else to pay bills but some [are] still homeless."

In order to ensure some stability and additional manpower, the street paper is interested in starting an internship program - tapping into local schools to get additional help.

Still, despite these technical struggles, Word on the Street produces work that makes the staff proud and has run some successful fundraisers, including an annual

art auction. The paper hosted a barbecue that didn't cost the publication any money and was open and free to the public. According to Haussling, around seven hundred to a thousand people attended. The paper also has collaborated with a city speaker's bureau, helping to raise awareness about homelessness.

Word on the Street's most recent issue focuses on domestic violence. Often, victims of domestic violence are financially supported by their abusers, and so escaping home brutality can mean homelessness.

Featured on the cover is artist Kimberly Sheridan holding her portrait of Victoria

Glover, a victim of gun violence. Sheridan's goal is to discover and paint the one million Americans who have died by gunshot since December 1980.

The work rings true to Word on the Street's goal of bringing a voice to those who might not otherwise be heard.



**Managing editor Damien Haussling**

PHOTO BY SARIIKA REDDY



**Stack of the current issue of Word on the Street**

PHOTO BY SARIIKA REDDY

# DC Libraries Address Homelessness

By Eilidh Jenness  
*Editorial Intern*

Public libraries were unofficial day shelters for the homeless long before computerized search engines replaced card catalogues and encyclopedias went in and out of vogue. As silent sanctuaries of learning situated in urban places, the buildings provide safe spaces for citizens - both sheltered and unsheltered - to take a rest, use the bathroom, warm up in the winter and cool off in the summer, learn valuable information and entertain themselves. As the DC public libraries work to better meet the needs of their patrons, the homeless population's interactions with the system are being taken into account.

The DC public library system has seen more use of the facilities by homeless individuals since affordable city housing has decreased. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, the District's main branch, is a daily stop for the United Planning Organization's transportation service that offers shuttle services to over one thousand unsheltered individuals.

Some homeless patrons stay in the library all day after getting off of the shuttle around 7 a.m.

Lee, a homeless library patron, wishes he could stay longer.

"I'm wondering why the library isn't [open] 24/7... a day shelter would be a good option, but it isn't an option," he said.

With its rising intake of patrons like Lee, the library has run into problems much more serious than overdue books.

On 11 a.m. on a Tuesday, a pile of

clothing sat in the corner of a women's restroom stall. Patrons occupied tables while staring blankly and rocking back and forth to stay awake. The foyer smelled like aerosol deodorant.

"There's a lot of traffic in the bathrooms... a lot of things happen in [them], from smoking to sex," Lee said.

The library system recently hired a social worker, Jean Badalamenti, to provide professional support while working with unhoused patrons.

"There is no day shelter downtown. The library needs to be engaged on a city level on how we're going to engage with the homeless," Badalamenti explained.

One of her first tasks is to train staff members on how to better serve homeless library patrons.

"The library hired 100 new people when we expanded hours last fall, and these people come from all over the country who might not have experience working in an urban library environment," Badalamenti stated.

The library already offers services like an adult literacy resource center, a workshop for unemployed patrons, and computer classes. These activities are designed for public participation but might not cater to the unsheltered.

"A lot of the programs [happen] after the hours that I have to be back at the shelter... that kind of leaves [the homeless population] out," Lee remarks.

"Do we need to do distinctive programming [for the homeless]? Do we go out into shelters? Librarians go out and do work at DC General... That relationship exists, but how do we expand on that?" Badalamenti

asked. She voiced concern about the privacy of patrons.

And she acknowledged that as public libraries stretch themselves to aid the homeless, they can't leave their other patrons' needs unmet.

"We want the library to be a safe place for everyone... [there are] rules for behavior that everyone needs to follow, including people with homes," Badalamenti said.

The DC public library system recently implemented policies aimed at helping to ensure its spaces stay clean and safe. The policies ban improper use of restrooms, placement of personal belongings in obstructive areas, sleeping, totting large personal items that exceed a certain measurement and having an odor that can be detected from six feet away, among other things.

"I'm a huge advocate of people needing two hours to take a nap. The library isn't that place," said Badalamenti.

Reviews of the library's policy enforcement are mixed.

Woody, a formerly homeless patron who used the library's resources to find a job, thinks the "[library] security does an excellent job." Thomas, a daily visitor of the library, thinks the librarians have "a good attitude," though he regularly sees them ask patrons to leave.

Nesha, a middle school student who spends time reading at the library a few times a week, said "This one security guard tapped [her] on the head [and asked her to wake up], but [she] wasn't asleep."

Although the DC public library system is making efforts to help its homeless patrons, city officials note that the largest

issue that needs to be addressed is that the library is not, after all, an actual day shelter, and should not continue to be used that way.

The library plans on collaborating with other service organizations and providers to obtain good referral information for people who may need it, which could not only benefit the people receiving the information, but also the other patrons who might be turned off by someone using the library for a purpose other than its intended use.

"If someone is sleeping... we want to be able to tell people where they can go to get two hours of rest during the day [and] if we're telling people that they need to shower... we've got to be able to tell people where they can go," Badalamenti said.

Last month, Friends of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, a group of DC residents who support the library's use and programming, met with librarians and homeless advocates to consider the best approaches the library can take to help the unsheltered population.

The issue is expected to be one of the topics discussed at the District's Interagency Council on Homelessness' next meeting on August 19th. Quite fittingly, the meeting will take place at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library downtown.

Sarah, a first-time patron who sits in the library listening to an iPod and studying a college textbook while sharing a table with a blank-faced homeless patron, thinks the space is fine.

"[The library is] better than I thought it would be based on the reviews I read," she said.

## First Lady Praises Reading

By Eilidh Jenness, *Editorial Intern*

"Reading might be the most important thing you can do for your future," First Lady Michelle Obama advised at a recent Summer Learning Day celebration sponsored by the National Summer Learning Association here in the District.

According to the Washington Literacy Center, 90,000 adults in the District are functionally illiterate. They are unable to fill out job applications, read menus, pay bills, or help their children with homework independently.

"When we think about education, we think about someone who's between 5 and 18 years of age. But the impact of education is lifelong," Terry Aglire, the executive director of the Washington Literacy Center explained.

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) reports that low-income youth lose more reading skills than any other group during the summer months. While

their middle- and high-income counterparts make slight gains in reading over the summer, low-income students lose over two months of gained skills.

These unequal summer results significantly contribute to the class-based achievement gap, and the future outcomes can be measured almost immediately. By the summer between the third and fourth grade, four-fifths of low-income students cannot read proficiently, which makes them four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient students.

"If you've got big dreams - and I know you all do - if you want to go to college, if you want to get a good job, if you want to make the most of your potential, then summer can't just be a vacation. It's really a time to try to get ahead," Obama said to more than 200 youth from across the nation who gathered to attend the summer learning event.

At least five of the twelve summer programs that participated in the celebration have branches in DC, and the majority of those programs provide special services for low-income students. Aglire said she believes the summer programs can improve the literacy rates in the District. "[Children] are the people who become adults in the community."

**Michelle Obama speaks with a student about his summer learning program.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF MURUGI THANDE



## Street Grammar: An Object Lesson in Subjectivity

Alexander Levering Kern  
Volunteer

The nightmares are worst inside a daydream.  
The car you've rear-ended tumbles off a cliff  
down to the sea, or how about this:  
you've abandoned your two-year-old son with a troll.  
Somehow there's no other choice.

Or how's this for terror? The Grand Inquisitor from the street  
comes to remind you of what you cannot forget.  
Hey man, he says, poverty is not pretty, and sure-as-hell  
not romantic. I don't care what you've heard  
about Saint Francis singing to the birds, Dust Bowl hobos  
riding the rails, Huck Finn and the Beatniks hitting the road.

Being homeless ain't what it used to be.  
What it used to be, never was.  
We're not tin ornaments for sermons or songs,  
or fodder for piety at holiday time.  
So watch what you say, and whatever you do,  
don't call us the homeless, because after all  
we are homeless people.  
And don't call us street people,  
because street is not an adjective,  
not one to use on people at least.

Don't make us objects. We are subjects and pronouns.  
Don't tie us up with participles that hang, or dismiss us  
too soon with qualifying clauses or the subjunctive mood.  
And whatever you do, Lord save us from the passive voice.

## U B-Long II Tha City-Part I

I hit tha streets at night  
-Just ta see people's lives  
-That aint really goin right  
-And it's a messed-up sight  
I'm telling you  
Something that you see  
-Will ruin your appetite  
-then how could you eat  
-After seeing people living cold and hungry  
-in the street  
-with old shoes on their feet  
-and snow on tha ground  
-about a foot deep  
And you think you've got it bad  
When everything they own  
-is in one trash bag  
-and their clothes look like rags  
-wit nowhere they can go  
-man they stuff is really sad  
-It's enough to make you mad  
Most who live alone  
-outside on the street curb  
-where you just copped yourself a bag  
of herb.



ILLUSTRATION BY MAURICE DAVIS

This excerpt is from Volume 7 of Maurice Davis' series, *Hoodcries: a collection of poetry and stories describing life on the streets and in prison*. Davis may be contacted at [hoodcriez@gmail.com](mailto:hoodcriez@gmail.com).

## AA Meetings at Age 20

Alexander Levering Kern  
Volunteer

Time was  
he'd sit in church basements  
in Washington, DC  
with powerful people  
confessing  
how powerless they finally were.

They'd stir their coffee  
pontificate  
about twelve steps:  
the ladder to humility.

They'd spin wild stories  
testimonies  
like revival-tent preachers  
preaching up sin  
  
and oh sweet mercy  
that moment when  
the rat trap jaws snapped shut and then  
the real work would begin.

## Free Your Mind

By Dannie Lee Baldwin, Jr.  
Volunteer

Free your mind  
Yourself within  
Think positive thoughts  
Then you begin  
To open up  
Freedom gates  
That's golden and new  
Thinking positive thoughts  
Where all negative thoughts  
Have been used



## Why?

By Dannie Lee Baldwin, Jr.  
Volunteer

Why the poor must be oppressed  
Like the day's sun that never rests  
Struggling, true, to and fro  
Just to exist  
How long  
No one knows.  
Like a grain of sand  
That is a glass over and over  
Time comes to pass, repeating itself.  
Some are told through the eyes of the  
wise and old  
On our feet we shall stand  
To give thy neighbor a guiding hand  
Through the darkness into the light  
Till the oppressors lost their sight  
For life's gift from God above  
Who has mercy and understanding love?

## Give Love to Gat Luv

I give love ta get luv from each and every-one  
The postman, a nomad  
-even a bum  
Cuz nowadays in this cold cruel world  
-everybody out here  
-needs some.  
So much hate and confusion  
-foul play and pollution  
We truly need love  
There is no substitution  
For that kid who lost his dad  
-his mom gives him love  
-now it's not so bad  
A prisoner on deathrow  
-doin a hard bid  
A love letter could lift him a bit  
A young girl with depression  
-who just slit her wrist  
Love could change her whole predicament

## Hunted

By Hayes Cobb  
Editorial Intern

I hear his foot steps  
along the jungle floor  
His purr echoes in my head  
then silence, for I now know  
No word I shall speak more  
Just let him jump out  
And leave me be

# ARE YOU ALREADY ON THE LIST? DO YOU STILL NEED AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE?



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2

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## CHILDREN'S ART: MARBLE ART FROM RESIDENTS OF DC GENERAL FAMILY SHELTER



2,453 school-age children experienced homelessness last year in D.C., about 1 and 20 children, or more than 1 child per classroom. The Homeless Children's Playtime Project visits 6 different transitional housing and emergency shelter programs to provide weekly activities, healthy snacks, and opportunities to play and learn to as many children as possible.

## L'ESCROC: EPISODE 2, PGS 5-6

By Dele Akerejah, Vendor



Courtesy of the Homeless Children's Playtime Project  
[HTTP://WWW.PLAYTIMEPROJECT.NET](http://WWW.PLAYTIMEPROJECT.NET)

# Soul Food: Will Work for Smiles

Jazmine Steele, Editorial Intern

He quit his job to pursue his bucket list full-time. His friends and family thought he was crazy but it wasn't that. He was on the brink of happiness and his ultimate destiny.

"It's cool that the very first item on my bucket list spawned so much more and I've been able to complete other items on the list because of the project" Massoud Adibpour, 31, founder of "Make DC Smile," said.

"Make DC Smile" is a social movement created to foster positivity in the city. The latest project features handmade positive affirmation posters made by a group of high school students from Canada. Adibpour recently did a speaking engagement with the students and continues to use every opportunity to encourage people to pay positivity forward. He believes energy -negative or positive- can be infectious. He made the decision to remain focused on the positive about two years ago. This was a different turn from the emotions he was experiencing as a recent grad in a seemingly comfortable job with a government contractor.

"I was depressed at some point because I was unhappy with my job and where I was at," he said. "I know people may experience that all the time or a sense of depression at some point but we don't

know what people are going through. Someone could be having the worst day of their life and we would never know it."

Outside his own personal struggles to find happiness, Adibpour knew he wasn't the only person. He lost friends to suicide. At this point, happiness became a life or death situation for him and uncovering the source of true happiness was necessary for his survival. Consequently, he had to leave his well-paying but ultimately unfulfilling job. He was miserable.

His bucket list became his life's guide. He literally carries the document in his wallet everywhere he goes. This list was not just any list, but a 100 item, personal life-giving challenge that provided opportunities for growth and true fulfillment.

The first challenge he took on from the list was to go outside and hold up signs with positive messages on them at a busy cross section in traffic. The signs read things like: 'Don't be so hard on yourself,' 'Today is awesome,' 'You're someone's reason to smile.'

He admits that the first five minutes were nerve-wracking and he had thoughts of leaving but he stayed and the reaction was overwhelmingly positive.

"People started honking their horns, waving, smiling, rolling down their windows and giving us high fives," he said.

"It felt really good."

In just one hour, Adibpour discovered the key to receiving happiness was to dish it out. He's been hooked ever since and has even gotten his friends to join in. In just two years, the movement has amassed nearly 3,000 friends on Facebook and he continues to lead various 'pay it forward' social gestures.

Adibpour has been featured in various publications being dubbed the 'Prince of Peace' by the Washington Post and also invited to speak at many local schools, colleges and even a TED Talk. Similar 'smile' movements have been started in Canada and Australia through Adibpour's travels. He has spent months at a time traveling abroad to China, South Asia, Germany, Holland, the Philippines and Australia. Traveling has been a huge influence on his personal journey to happiness.

"I was learning about cultures," Adibpour said. "A lot of us get our opinions from the news and the media and it's awful because when I go to these countries I see that not everyone is going to be like that [media stereotypes] there's a lot of negative stuff on the TV and in the newspapers. I just wanted to go and see things for myself."

He says he needed travel time to form his own opinions and develop thoughts about what was most important in his life.



He feels many people don't take much time for that level of reflection and self-care. He referenced how other countries have a gap year for students between high school and college. American culture typically follows the culture of getting education, finding a job and starting a family. While Adibpour recognizes all of those things as important he believes there is so much more to life.

"It's a balance to choose to work to live or live to work," he said.

Adibpour took a leap and made the choice to let his passion fuel his work and life. The "Make DC Smile" movement is still growing strong. Not only can you see the handmade affirmation signs all over the District, he also plans to set up a note card station on the street near a post box for people to stop by and send a note of affirmation to someone they know. The projects are usually small but effective. If you're out and stumble across a project, don't be afraid to stop and participate. Adibpour says it's all about the little things.



By Gwynette Smith, Vendor

PREVIOUSLY: Gayle, a lawyer at Los Angeles Legal Aid, has traveled to Boston to attend a 5-day American Bar Association conference on consumer and juvenile delinquency law...

The people in the line smiled when she reached them.

"Hello! Are you with the law conference down the street?"

"Yes, I am. Are you?"

"Yep, Why don't you join us?"

"Would love to. I don't know anyone here so far; feared it would be lonely the whole time..."

Gayle ordered the lobster salad and thought to herself, "thank goodness the job is paying for my transportation and expenses."

The day of the conference arrived and the speaker for that breakfast session was a renowned DC attorney in the area of consumer law. People rushed to talk with him after the meeting. Gayle joined the group.

They all talked and a friend of Paul Baker, the speaker, joined the group. He

was introduced as Jimmie Thorpe, an architect with the Army and he, like Paul, was from DC. He was pretty decent looking, Gayle thought.

After chatting for a while, the group started to break up. Gayle was about to leave when Jimmie caught up with her and said "Gee, you used to be in DC in school! I'm going to be seeing some of Boston while I'm here for awhile. Would you like to see some of the place too?" he asked.

"I have been here previously but I didn't see everything," Gayle said. "It's a really interesting city. Sure as long as it doesn't conflict with the conference."

He got her phone number and she got his. They said goodbye and Gayle joined the others for lunch at the back of the ballroom. Gayle and Jimmie were able to synchronize their schedules. He was in town to see how his cousin Paige from Oakland Hills, Calif. was getting along, now that Paige had started at Boston University.

They ate sushi, saw Faneuil Hall, the Isabella Gardner Museum, the birthplace of John F. Kennedy, the House of the Blues. Gayle got to meet Paige. She said she thought he liked BU and was getting adjusted to it. They saw Michael Jackson at

Symphony Hall. When he sang "Rock with You," Gayle glanced at him and he smiled.

After their first date, they eventually ended up with a nightcap at his hotel. He seemed romantic to Gayle. For some reason, she never seemed to remember to take her birth control pills. She'd leave his hotel and take a cab back to hers. Gayle left Boston first and Jimmie brought her a bunch of flowers to say "goodbye."

She never expected to see him again. She had told him that she was in the process of moving to Sunset Boulevard and did not know what address or phone number she would have. She had also told him that she was on the pill and was steadily dating a police officer at the LAPD. They had sometimes joked about him. It had helped the story by referring to a real personality type. Gayle took Jimmie's current phone number and address in Southwest DC and that was that. It had just been a brief rendezvous and nothing more, she told herself.

Back in LA, Gayle gave her presentation about the information covered at the conference. Her life became regular again. She and Buzz enjoyed their outings exploring the neighborhood, its shops and people. Sometimes she felt more tired than usual but she thought that the traveling and speaking as well as seeing her

clients had drained her.

Then one morning before work she became nauseous. She thought about her encounter with Jimmie and vowed to see a doctor if happened too often. She might just have had a nervous stomach for some reason. It happened a couple more times and the doctor confirmed that she was pregnant. She knew it was Jimmie's. She realized then she had a lot of thinking to do. She decided she wanted to keep the baby. She planned to learn more about Jimmie Thorpe though.

She knew she never wanted her child or children to become any kind of pawn in her career. She didn't want them used because she might make more money at one place instead of another. She didn't want her child or children affected by the career she did or didn't take either, not because of public perception of her, anyway. Her private life would remain private and only her closest friends would know about any children she might have.

Gayle loved LA but she thought for financial reasons she might have to leave one day. Perhaps she might return to DC and work for the federal government, either in the city or in the suburbs, at least for awhile.

*The End.*

## COMICS & GAMES

**BARNEY & CLYDE**

BARNEY & CLYDE IS A COMIC STRIP ABOUT AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A HOMELESS MAN AND A TYCOON. IT'S ABOUT OUR MODERN, POLARIZED ECONOMY OF HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS. IT RE-EXAMINES TRADITIONAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS, FAILURE, AND THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS.

**BARNEY**

A HORSE IS A HORSE, OF COURSE, OF COURSE...  
AND HORSES ARE FAMOUSLY STUDS, OF COURSE.  
UNLESS, OF COURSE, THE NAME OF THAT HORSE...  
IS THE FAMOUS MISTER E.D.

Dud2Stud®, new from Pillsbury Pharmaceuticals.

Speechless. HAS to be good, n  
No.

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8-17

by Weingartens & Clark

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: GENE WEINGARTEN IS A COLLEGE DROPOUT AND THE NATIONALLY SYNDICATED HUMOR COLUMNIST FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. DAN WEINGARTEN IS A FORMER COLLEGE DROPOUT AND A CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENT MAJORING IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. MANY THANKS TO GENE WEINGARTEN AND THE WASHINGTON POST WRITER'S GROUP FOR ALLOWING STREET SENSE TO RUN BARNEY & CLYDE.

### Crowded Church

By Chris Shaw, "The Cowboy Poet"

Passion Sunday dawned quite crisp;  
Even the Sun was delighted at this.  
In streamed Alanethia,  
Beryl and Ruby.  
Charles tipped his natty straw, and  
Stepped the "Ooby-Doobie"  
Into his front row pew.  
Yes, the Christanthemum Baptist  
Tabernacle  
Was alit with fervent brim and  
Treacle,  
All for the love of The Lord.  
Marquis and Marla,  
Quite the loving pair,  
Decked out in lime-ice  
suit and skirts,  
Why they presented so lovely,  
Your eye might believe it had hurt!  
Florence and Gage,  
had turned the page, 'pon  
Arg'in and swattin,' now it was  
Nothing but Peace in the Valley.  
Look then at Miss Sally,  
She's been done with the Alley,  
For Holiness is her new adoration.  
Ben began again, Here in the nave,  
Just imagine all the tithes he has "Gave."  
Maudie Anne and her daughter Keila,  
Had taken their customary perch  
So at least they had the best view  
Of that handsome Pastor Lerch!  
As the organ creaked and groaned  
Its lonesome joyful tone of the arising  
hymn, a strange grinding noise  
Startled the sexton Jim,

As he stood in the front font alcove  
Straightening his best Sabbath clothes,  
A frayed bowtie to top off his  
coveralls.  
Jim tried to call, he needed to warn them more--  
But the dump truck's evil roar  
Went unheeded,  
Now all prayers were needed;  
Since the huge oily engine grille  
Plowed through the  
Brick and wood veneer,  
And rent the rippling purple  
Drapes, then--  
The massive machine  
Crushed the napes and Adam's apples  
of Alanethia, Grace, Beryl and Charles Mapple.  
His Panama straw rolled helplessly across the aisle.  
Through the crunch of splitting timber and ripped  
Purple satin;  
Reverend Lerch raised both palms,  
Tears welling his eyes, he cried,  
Let us pray a Blessed Matins,  
For our beloved dead,  
Who have given up their lives,  
Like Christ,  
In the Love of the Lord,  
In the Love of Our Lord!

### KLEVER'S

By Chino Dean, Vendor



*I'll morph* is away making time for summer reading, but he'll return in the next great issue of Street Sense!

## How Reading and Writing Helped Me

By Jeffrey McNeil, Vendor

Before I came to Street Sense, I never liked to read or write. I made attempts to read books but few interested me. In school I disliked reading literature and novels: I believe that was because I couldn't identify with writers that didn't look like me.

I didn't start reading until I became homeless. Because I was marginalized and isolated, I spent most of my time at the library. The first book I read thoroughly was the Bible. I was functionally illiterate and was reading at a seventh grade level, so I had a hard time comprehending what I read. Because I was cynical about God, I got a dictionary and slowly read each verse and chapter. I then began to understand and grasp words from the Bible and started reading other books.

Writing didn't come naturally for me. I wasn't a born writer. I never wrote anything down and didn't take things seriously. I cringe at some of my earlier works; I basically ranted and my opinions were not backed by evidence. However, any skill can be improved through dedication and practice. As with any writer, I don't like my work being edited so I bought books on how to write and edit my work. I'm

always trying to improve, so I belong to many writing groups and reading classes.

I used to never have a diary, but today I write in my journal every morning and try to read a book a month. Reading has provided me the intellectual curiosity I need so I'm always looking for ways to challenge myself and think critically. Although I like to write, I love researching even more.

Writing has taught me how to be self-reliant and do things for myself. I learned if you want to prove your point, learn to write the story in your own words or someone else will write a narrative you may dislike.

When you learn to read well you will become liberated. Before I elaborate on a subject, I research the topic first. I believe my best work comes when I can explain the causes of problems and find solutions that are pragmatic. Everyone knows the world's screwed up, but it's hard to find writers that propose any reasonable solutions.

I used to be a political writer. Today I consider myself a non-partisan writer.

I used to read Marx, Alinsky and Sartre; I used to want to burn things to the

ground. Today I read black conservative writers such as Thomas Sowell, Walter E. Williams and Shelby Steele.

I no longer read books about liberation, socialism and Marxism, which I believe do nothing but make you angry, bitter and plant the seeds of resentment and discontent.

My favorite books are books of strong black men and women who came from poverty and became something productive. They overcome the lure of being welfare-dependent and became successful.

Ben Carson's Gifted Hands is a classic. He tells the story of being born to a single mother who resisted charity and handouts and got a job working for rich people. She studied their ways and made her son read books and write reports on them. Because of his mother drive to escape poverty, Carson became one of the world's top neurosurgeons.

Currently I am reading books about illegal immigration and am fascinated with the subject. So if any of my customers have any recommendations or suggestions on what to read or study, it would be greatly appreciated.

## Ode to a Park Bench

By James Davis, Vendor

As I lay down on this park bench  
Try as I might to avoid the stench  
hoping that it doesn't rain  
So I won't get drenched  
I can't help but think back  
to the days  
When I had a comfortable bed  
a place of solace  
With a roof above my head  
It makes me wonder where did  
Time go and where did it take me  
long after friend and family forsaken me  
I now start to dream  
but my thoughts are colorless  
Or so it seems tonight there'll  
be no golden picture frame  
to glorify my memories  
as the rain awakens me in the park with  
no name.

 \*This poem and more are available in 'Street Verses,' a collection of poetry from Street Sense 2003-6. The book is available online through [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and [BarneAndNobles.com](http://BarneAndNobles.com)

## Children Are Our Gift

By Ashley McMullen, Vendor



Every day, there is a child suffering from abuse at the hands of parents or foster or adoptive parents. Child abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional mistreatment of a child.

The four major categories of abuse of a child are neglect and physical, psychological and sexual abuse. I suffered from physical and psychological abuse as a child and know how these children feel. The physical aspect can involve aggressive actions such as hitting the child. Child neglect is defined as a failure to take care of a child's needs for things such as food, proper clothing, shelter and medical care.

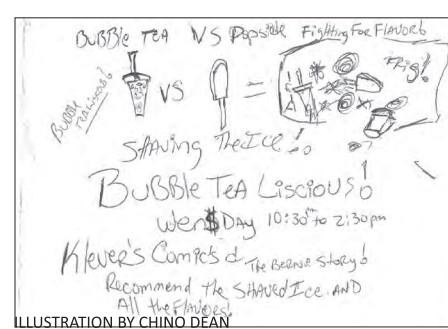
There is one case that recently stood out to me. There was a boy in Michigan who suffered from abuse from his step-mother. This boy was locked in the basement for 11 days. He also had to perform different exercises even after he repeatedly told his stepmom that he didn't want to do them anymore. Child abuse needs to stop now.

## The Story of Bernie Dean: Part 2

By Chino Dean  
Vendor

In the last part, I described how Bernie Dean, Jr. grew up in Linden, NJ...

This next part might surprise the crowd who thinks of Bernie as incompetent. From a young age, his goal was nothing more than getting the best for his team, his classmates, his friends. When he was eight years old, he helped lead his team to a baseball championship as a pitcher.



He also was point guard for his championship basketball team. He played right wing for his soccer team. In football, he played wide receiver, running back, quarterback and on occasions, kicker. In the park recreation summer sports program, he excelled at paddle tennis. He was also an artist and a writer, composing cartoons and plays.

(to be continued)

## Mosquitoes

By Derian Hickman, Vendor

While I'm working,  
When I'm not working.  
When I lost my employment position,  
When I look for work.  
When there is a meal to complain about,  
The thought of no meal.  
They find me all the time,  
apparently a better source of sustenance.

Hey! Where is my unclaimed property?



PHOTO COURTESY OF TNAKAWHO/FLICKR



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHNNY MOBASHER

Rachel Cain  
Editorial Intern

When Ivory Wilson tells a story, it takes on a life of its own. He stands up, his diamond-encrusted gold tooth flashing as he speaks, and makes dramatic gestures. When he discusses his writing, he dives into his duffel bag to retrieve some of his most treasured items: a copy of his first book and the flash drive to which he saves his current stories. However, he spends the most time on his phone, going through the pictures and videos of his fans stopping by at his street corner to say hello.

"I write [my stories] for my fans," Wilson explained.

Ivory Wilson, a *Street Sense* vendor, has published three books and will soon release two more. His writings span widely different genres, from personal memoirs to detective stories.

"Not everyone likes the same type of story," he said. "I try to write something to reach everyone."

His first two books, *A Player's Manual: Wanna Be a Pimp?* and *Big Mack the Sequel* are memoirs and reflections of the years he spent during his young adult life as a pimp. He wrote *A Player's Manual*, which has sold around 3,000 copies and is now available in the Library of Congress, while serving a jail sentence for drug distribution.

Wilson was compelled to write the book when he heard the other prisoners discuss how they wanted to become pimps once they were released. Once he finished writing, he passed the book around to the other prisoners.

"I want not to be an advocate, but to save men from taking the path I took," said Wilson.

Now, two filmmakers from Nevada are interested in transforming these two books into a movie.

Wilson's third published book, *The Magi-*

cal Writings of Ivory Wilson

contains fourteen whimsical short stories about genies, rabbits and one of the most popular characters among his fans, Nina the Detective.

"If you open *The Magical Writings of Ivory Wilson* and read just one story, you'll be hooked," Wilson said.

Wilson hopes his first kids' book, *Dreams, Wonders, and Travels*, will be on Amazon by November. Two young girls are illustrating the stories for him. The assortment of stories includes tales about arctic ice hockey, baseball with aliens and the Loch Ness Monster. Wilson promises the story about the Loch Ness Monster "is so good, it might get me invited to Buckingham Palace."

*Weekend Cowboys*, a book Wilson will publish soon, is about the rodeo in Texas. Wilson himself grew up in Texas, where he rode horses and helped his family raise cattle.

"I didn't think I'd be a writer—it was the furthest thing from my mind," he expressed. "Today I'm a writer and I'm happy."

Wilson self-publishes his books with the money he makes selling *Street Sense* papers and then sells his books on Amazon, on the street and in his hometown's Barnes & Noble.

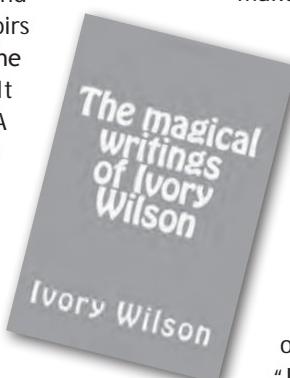
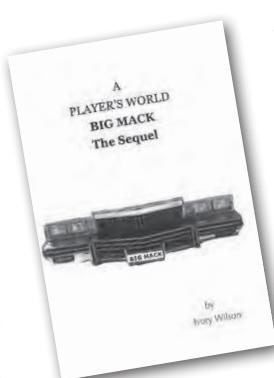
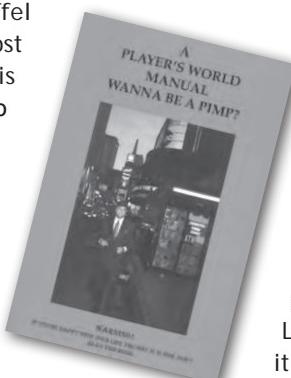
When I asked Wilson how he gets the inspiration for his writing, he replied, "Hell, I don't know, you tell me and let me know."

He mimed writing frantically on a piece of paper on his lap. "I'll just be sitting there on a bench, and be possessed."

He writes an entire story all in one sitting ("like da Vinci," he said), and once it's done, it's done. He tries to avoid going back to his stories and making adjustments.

What he does know is that he writes for his fans and his *Street Sense* customers.

"It's something you can read at work, or while getting coffee," Wilson said. "It perks up their day, and that makes my day."



## Debbie BRANTLEY

### Mountain Shoes

She had had it rough in the wintertime ... And had usually worn mountain tennis shoes ... From someone, somewhere, very rich, ... Powerful and I think, historically influential...

By painstaking relief for mountains which she served dutifully both day and night. As a creature worshipped plainly by waystanders in we halt fashion. A directed staffer who resolved to turn in her own locks by damage if she did not waten out, geopastley seen and unseen. The scopes which cause eatense "tree" damage, per se by wine and by candy might, which are highly MCF and pristine to the left side by the liner which is then soluble pulffering roughly like a big baby bansher waying continuously and rough as a diamond by poundage and for quisling or tiny microscope, money for his sake. (A Quiz) scored (B)

### Gemini Eyes

What a surprise  
I ran through Jiminy Cricket,  
And, clearly, he said, "here's the ticket."

Of influence, that I had thought clearly about  
Thoroughly convincing, a Randolph  
A piercing a threshold of tauts  
Though it was not his fault

"I am at fault, I am at fault, I am clearly at fault,"  
About a thought punching me in my face  
"I guess I'll buy some salt  
I know it won't give me grace, he argued" three ways

And all the ladies together  
Warned fluidly, by thought, the manager  
Of the place, whenever  
They scolded the deavers.

### In Pursuit of Dayglo

By persistence of innocence for by which energy grows (suddenly and mighty upward) ... Suddenly transiently upward in huge fashion ... By mighty perturbation of glowing therreas ... A nuclear threat is underway by powers sternly multiplied hesitatingly forward...

By a consequential miehtan green.  
Glowing steadily hastening for pleasures by the hand, a stalwart green fascination by luck. She is lucky. The witch whose tiny smelly index finger casually ties shoes for dullards.

A swipe and sells microscopic contents

of lather by richy sepucing the poster standee by mighty wind in halston.  
A fab conscience made built by a rivercreon otto andhe which uses manure to post the green side to which a nine of havercreature by knowledge through and by the wind. Mightily blowing sideways through habitual causeway.  
Another business to the extreme fortune caused by getaway of plainness to the extreme halsion han a sure of the left and swiftly running in all directions, without being a wheel within a whell are four ways standing.

# Mysterious Masonic Ring

## Chapter 11: Bowler for Dollars (cont'd)

By John "Mick" Matthews  
Vendor

**PREVIOUSLY:** The mysterious Bowler Hat introduces himself as Mr. Smythe and invites Bill to dinner. In spite of his dread of the man, Bill agrees to go...

Smythe led me across Pennsylvania Avenue to the restaurant in question. I always did like the stained glass rendering of the Elephant and Castle logo visible from the front window: an elephant, with what looked like an enormous rook piece from a chess set made of brick. Might sound funny, but while I liked the logo, I always felt sorry for the elephant, carrying what had to be many times the proverbial 'ton of bricks' on his back.

As we entered, Smythe made a beeline to the hostess' stand. A pretty woman in her mid-20's was working it that night, and her eyes lit up like the National Christmas Tree when she saw him approach.

"Is my usual private table available this evening, my dear?" he asked, extending his hand. Several bills were barely visible, almost poking out of his fingertips.

"Of course, Mr. Smyth," she responded, "anything for one of our favorite customers."

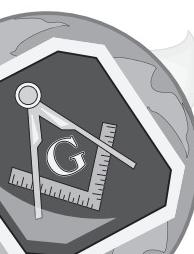


ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN POOLE

She shook his hand in a most lady-like manner, and the bills were nowhere to be seen when he drew his hand back. She picked up a pair of menus and gestured for us to follow her. I was surprised when she started leading us through the kitchen and into an intimately sized room, of which the dim lights were augmented with candles on wall sconces as well as a 4-candle candelabra in the center of the table.

"OK..." I said, "this seems a little too... romantic of an atmosphere for what I thought we might be here for."

"Ahh, you can relax Bill," Smythe responded, "I usually have this room made available to me for, shall we say - more illicit, rendezvous than what I have planned for tonight."

"Well, the hostess didn't seem put out by my presence here," I commented, "so does that mean that you're...?"

I left the question hanging, not really

wanting to finish it and possibly angering him and thereby messing this up.

"Bisexual, I believe, is the word you are looking for Bill," he quickly answered. "As the Roman emperor Caligula once put it, 'I like both nymphs and satyrs.' I hope that's not a problem?"

*Wow, I thought, behind closed doors and he's quoting Caligula in less than 10 minutes. If he says 'Luke I am your father' at anytime during this conversation, I am out of here.*

"Of course not," I answered, hoping I didn't sound as creeped out as I felt. "Just understand that this 'satyr' is not for you. I am strictly into 'nymphs.'"

"I wouldn't dream of ruining you for that charming young lady I saw you with at the monument the other day," he said. Normally I would conduct a meeting of this nature at the Caucus Room or some other similar establishment, but I suppose your previous economic status left you, not of your own fault mind you, rather ignorant of proper style and attire. Since Elephant and Castle was nearby, it seemed capital to bring you here to discuss things. To do so over a meal seemed only civilized. And at any rate, the food here is quite good for a three-star restaurant."

With that, an attractive young woman, looking barely out of high school, walked in. She wore a black shirt, black pants, and a black apron around her waist.

"Good evening, gentlemen," she said, with much more poise than I would have expected from someone her apparent age. "My name is Angel, and I'll be your waitress this evening. May I get you something to drink? An appetizer maybe?"

Smythe ordered a Manhattan and a shrimp cocktail. I opted for mozzarella sticks and a cup of coffee.

"You don't want anything stronger than that?" he asked, surprised.

"I might have a Jack and Coke after dinner," I started to explain, "but after the first year of, let's just call it 'my situation,' I saw alcohol ruin a lot of lives. I've all but stopped drinking after that. Not to mention, living on the streets generally requires you to have your wits about you as a matter of survival. You never know when some group of punks is gonna want to take advantage of you, one way or another."

*Plus, I don't trust you as far as I can throw that statue of Ben Franklin outside, I thought. If I'm gonna pull this off, I need my wits about me. And I'll be damned if I let you get me drunk enough to take this ring off my finger.*

(to be continued)

## AUTHOR SPOTLIGHTS

JOHN  
"MICK"  
MATTHEWS



PHOTO BY JANE CAVE

By Eilidh Jenness

Editorial Intern

Four or five years ago, the name John "Mick" Matthews didn't mean anything to the pedestrians walking past Warner Theatre, where Matthews used to panhandle.

Now he's published every other week in *Street Sense* as the author of *The Mysterious Masonic Ring*. The on-going story has acquired a fan club, and many readers look forward to its next segment in each new issue.

"I'm probably the longest-winded writer *Street Sense* has," Matthews guesses, explaining how his writing is always cut into new pieces once he submits it in order to fit it in his permanent space in the paper.

But the episodes don't take as long to craft as some might think based on their entertainment value. Matthews does most of his writing the night before its due, working until morning at the Au Bon Pain at Union Station.

Matthews has different outlets of inspiration, and many of them come from reading other novels in his free time. He's currently reading (and loving!) the A Song of Fire and Ice series, which is the inspiration behind Game of Thrones. Matthews has never seen the television show.

"Nobody taught me how to write. I learned by reading... There's no such thing as purely original writing. The basic principles of stories are always the same," Matthews explains.

"I'd always been a big fan of Dan Brown... [but] I was really disappointed in his use of the city's geography. There were errors in [The Lost Symbol, which is based in DC] that screamed at me. I'm a Washingtonian!... I was really mad about that. And the ending. The ending was very anti-climactic."

When Matthews started writing *The Mysterious Masonic Ring*, which was inspired by a man he met with a Masonic ring during the OccupyDC movement,

he wanted to correct Brown's geographic mistakes. Matthews always includes the location of his characters at the start of each episode.

But when it comes to places in the District, Matthews doesn't favor just one.

"One place is as good as another," he says.

Matthews currently sells in the Foggy Bottom area, but he moves around. He does have at least one consistent customer, though, whose visits brighten his days.

"She'll always have little things for me. Socks, a shirt, Spam, a backpack. She's my favorite customer. Getting to know this lady has been an experience. She showed me this website for the top twenty-five douchiest bars in DC... I used to go to half of them!" Matthews explains, laughing.

Although it seems as if Matthews has found his true calling in writing, he has job experience in just about every labor-intensive area.

"I've done everything from office work to construction to landscaping to retail to door-to-door sales. You name it, I've probably done it."

But he had three heart attacks last year, which makes returning to those jobs difficult. He's also had difficulty tracking down viable references from companies for which he's done work that closed in a bad economy.

"It could happen to you. It's one of those things where you lose your job, a family member dies and leaves you in debt or whatever. Sometimes the most outrageous things you can imagine happen to you... you don't think about it until it happens," he says of homelessness.

Apart from reading and writing, Matthews also finds happiness in his personal relationships.

"There's someone who makes me happy," he says.

"I'm trying to make her happy, though. That's the thing."

## Living in Vein

By Veda Simpson, Vendor

I was twelve the first time I used heroin. I had a good home life with two parents, one sister, and two brothers. My mother had worked in the government, but my father made her quit—he wanted to be the sole provider for the family. I didn't want for anything. I was my daddy's baby. Everywhere he went I wanted to go. He was an auto mechanic and I went to work with him whenever I could. I wanted to be just like him. But it didn't turn out that way.

I had always been a tomboy. More than anything, I loved playing football with the boys. When my mother gave me a doll baby for Christmas—a Tiny Tears Doll—I threw it in the trash, and I got a whooping for that.

In third grade, I took this little boy's watch and told my mother that I won it in a spelling contest, and I got a whooping for that.

I wanted to fight my teacher. My mother said since I wanted to be the class clown, she came and beat me in front of the class.

I got to junior high school, and stayed in so much trouble that the principal called my mother to come to a meeting. But then they called my mother to tell her not to come because someone had set fire to the school. Little did they know I had set that fire to keep my mother from coming up to the school.

As bad as my behavior was, I was a good student and earned my high school diploma on schedule.

The way I first started using heroin? My cousin introduced me to it. I snorted it, but I didn't like the drain from my nose. I

also didn't like the taste as it went down.

I had smoked weed when I was ten and I liked that because it kept me mellow and gave me the munchies. I had done acid too, but I didn't like the way it made me speed and hallucinate.

When I was introduced to heroin, I knew it was my ideal drug. It kept me mellow. All during my teen years, I continued to inject it. By the time I turned 21, I had used every vein in my body: my legs, my arms, my neck, my fingers, my feet, my toes, my stomach, my groin, my forehead, my breasts. After a while, my veins collapsed. They just burnt out and there was no place else to inject.

So I had to shoot into my spider veins, like those little ones on the back of my hand. Finally I would just inject into my arm or my butt or my back—they call it skin popping—which takes longer to feel the effect.

To pay for my habit, I hustled. I forged so many checks, I probably could have forged the president's signature.

I was wanted up and down the East Coast, from New York to Florida. So I went out to California with my brother, who was in the Coast Guard. He knew everything about me, but I could do no wrong in my brother's eyesight.

In San Francisco, I got stopped for driving a car with a taillight that was out. The popo (police) who stopped me did a nationwide check and found I was wanted everywhere on the East Coast.

They locked me up. Immediately, I became so sick, suffering withdrawal without heroin.

(to be continued)

The Street Sense Writers' Group is led by two writing professionals and meets every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. The group's goal is to develop ideas and collaborate on the next great issue of *Street Sense*.



## My Katrina: Part 17

By Gerald Anderson, Vendor

*Previously: When we saw houses that looked like we could reach them, the man circle his motorboat, like how you go fishing. We then got off the boat wearing our lifesavers and swam to rescue folks. There was this old man, he ain't got no legs, just his torso. So me and KK carry him. He so scared. He keep sayin', "Please don't drop me. Please don't drop me." Finally we get close enough to pass him over to Calio and the man driving the boat. When we got back to the projects, we heard about some shootin'. So we went to the old side, where we found an old addict we know, named Butch. He got hit by bullets in his leg and on his side. That bullet burnin' him, and he so soakin' wet. All him bleedin' make him drippin' pink all over. He hollerin' "Help me!"*

KK grab one side of him and I grab one side. We escort him down the stairs like that. Ain't nothin' we really could do but get him some towels. He bleedin' so bad, we didn't want to touch that, so we reach him some towels and he tie them around his leg.

Only thing he really care about was tryin' to get them drugs in him.

After that we left him on our side of the projects with my homeboys who was looking after things.

Then me, Calio, and KK go out once again to see if anybody need help.

We see a U-Haul, not a big one, but one of them baby U-Hauls floatin' and tilting-like. You could see it rockin'. So I say, "Damn see that truck? Look like somebody in that truck!"

When we open it, there was a lady and a man inside. They say, "Please help us."

So we helped them out of the U-Haul and onto the boat with us. After that we asked the man where he was trying to go. He say, "Anywhere," and that he was trying to drive the truck.

I tell them, "We can take you to the Superdome."

On the way we ran into another dead body in the water. It was a young girl in her 20s floatin' in them floodwaters. That's when we started seeing kids' shoes, baby shoes, baby clothes, kid's dresses. We didn't know who the body was. We

cruisin' down in the boat and it came from nowhere.

All we could do was let it float by.

I said maybe the lady had kids with her because we seen clothes and shoes, but we had to just keep goin' to try to get the people where they goin at.

That's when I say, "We gotta make a way to get outta this place." This time I mean it.

When we drop the people from the U-Haul at the Superdome, the National Guard told us whenever we ready to surrender to leave they would escort us with trucks and helicopters.

What he say stood in the back of my mind, and I say to Calio, "Are we ready?"

He kept saying, "We might don't have to leave man."

I said, "Nah. One way or the other we gotta get outta here."

That's when I told KK that tomorrow we gonna go to them National Guard by the Superdome and the Convention Center and let them know we got a lotta people stuck here at the project and they afraid to come out and we afraid they ain't gonna make it.

We gonna tell them people here stuck with seizures and bad hearts. And that we don't have no food and no more water. People complain they need their medicine, all kind of things. Our way of helping them survive just ain't workin' no more.

We gonna tell them all this, like exaggeratin'. That's the only way to get them moving fast like we want them to.

The next day, Calio agreed to go with us. We got to the Superdome and the Convention Center and we told the guards they need to get to the uptown projects as soon as possible. I tell them it's the one near the Greyhound Bus Station.

The man say, "There any wires?" That's in case they have to use helicopters.

I told them, "No, it's all clear." They say they'll go there.

So we return back to the projects. I was getting out of the boat, and I slipped and hit my face in the water. I don't know what it was but something bit me in that water. It swell my whole face up.

(to be continued)

## Vibrating Rainbows

By Chon Gotti, Vendor



Wherever man goes and whatever he does, he finds himself bound in a strong relationship. In each of his thoughts, words and deeds he finds the same and merges in it.

It vibrates his dormant nerves and motivates him a lot. Perfectly and sincerely, he does all his works and successful he becomes. This smiling rainbow enhances the beauty of his life. Spending his days with all happiness and smiles he offers his gratitude to the Almighty.

## Why Do I Love People?

By Jacqueline Turner, Vendor

- 1) God said to.
- 2) People make up my world.
- 3) People are kind when given the chance.
- 4) People are imaginative and creative.
- 5) People come in all sizes, shapes and colors.
- 6) No two people are exactly alike.
- 7) People take care of the earth and keep it going.
- 8) People have "style."
- 9) People are always moving, growing, learning, and evolving.
- 10) People are capable of love and laughter.

**By Levester Green  
Vendor**

Here I stand on the corner with my Street Sense in hand, trying to make the good folks understand. It's our only way of making a living. We won't stop, not even if we make a grand! Getting off the streets is the plan. So buy two, buy three, four or more if you can! Give them to your crew, your fans, or the next man! We're neighborhood rockstars! Come see the Street Sense band of merry men! Be prepared to spend! It's on you that we depend. We can't pretend. Won't you be a friend, not halfway, but to the end?!



Levester and Brian Lashay from WUSA9 takes a selfie! #VendorLOVE

**Academy of Hope:** 269-6623  
601 Edgewood St, NE  
[aohdc.org](http://aohdc.org)



**Bread for the City:**  
265-2400 (NW) | 561-8587 (SE)  
1525 7th St, NW | 1640 Good Hope Rd, SE  
[breadforthecity.org](http://breadforthecity.org)



**Calvary Women's Services:** 678-2341  
1217 Good Hope Road, SE  
[calvaryservices.org](http://calvaryservices.org)



**Catholic Charities:** 772-4300  
[catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp](http://catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp)



**Charlie's Place:** 232-3066  
1830 Connecticut Ave, NW  
[charliesplacedc.org](http://charliesplacedc.org)



**Christ House:** 328-1100  
1717 Columbia Rd, NW  
[christhouse.org](http://christhouse.org)



**Church of the Pilgrims:** 387-6612  
2201 P St, NW  
[churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach](http://churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach)  
food (1 - 1:30 on Sundays only)



**Community Council for the Homeless  
at Friendship Place:** 364-1419  
4713 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
[cchfp.org](http://cchfp.org)



**Community Family Life Services:**  
347-0511  
305 E St, NW  
[cflsdc.org](http://cflsdc.org)



**Community of Hope:** 232-7356  
[communityofhopedc.org](http://communityofhopedc.org)



**Covenant House Washington:**  
610-9600  
2001 Mississippi Avenue, SE  
[covenanthousedc.org](http://covenanthousedc.org)



**D.C. Coalition for the Homeless:**  
347-8870  
1234 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
[dccfh.org](http://dccfh.org)



**Father McKenna Center:** 842-1112  
19 Eye St, NW  
[fathermckennacenter.org](http://fathermckennacenter.org)



**Food and Friends:** 269-2277  
219 Riggs Rd, NE  
[foodandfriends.org](http://foodandfriends.org)  
(home delivery for those suffering from HIV, cancer, etc)



**Foundry Methodist Church:** 332-4010  
1500 16th St, NW  
[foundryumc.org/ministry-opportunities](http://foundryumc.org/ministry-opportunities)  
ID (FRIDAY 9-12 ONLY)



**Georgetown Ministry Center:**  
338-8301  
1041 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
[georgetownministrycenter.org](http://georgetownministrycenter.org)



**Gospel Rescue Ministries:** 842-1731  
810 5th St, NW  
[grm.org](http://grm.org)



**Jobs Have Priority:** 544-9128  
425 Snd St, NW  
[jobshavepriority.org](http://jobshavepriority.org)



**John Young Center:** 639-8569  
119 D Street, NW



**Martha's Table:** 328-6608  
2114 14th St, NW  
[marthastable.org](http://marthastable.org)



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

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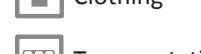


Medical/Healthcare

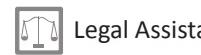


Employment Assistance

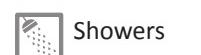
**Clothing**



**Transportation**



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### DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS HOTLINE

1-888-7WE HELP (1-888-793-4357)

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**St. Luke's Mission Center:** 333-4949

3655 Calvert St. NW

[stlukesmissioncenter.org](http://stlukesmissioncenter.org)



**Thrive DC:** 737-9311

1525 Newton St, NW

[thrivedc.org](http://thrivedc.org)



**Unity Health Care:** 745-4300

3020 14th St, NW

[unityhealthcare.org](http://unityhealthcare.org)



**The Welcome Table:** 347-2635

1317 G St, NW

[epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable](http://epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable)



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## LAST WORD: MAYA ANGELOU

By Sibyl Taylor, Vendor



Her voice lifted the nation and lifted up our hearts. She inspired the hearts of many people across the nation and across the world. She was a legend; a great poet who touched souls and won the love of people everywhere. Her books lift the burdens of everyday situations. Her legend and spirit will live in our hearts forever. The poetry and stories she wrote were gifts of wisdom and encouragement. She gave us hope, words that we could not find. She helped us to see clearly when the light was dimmest. She offered light and wisdom to the world.

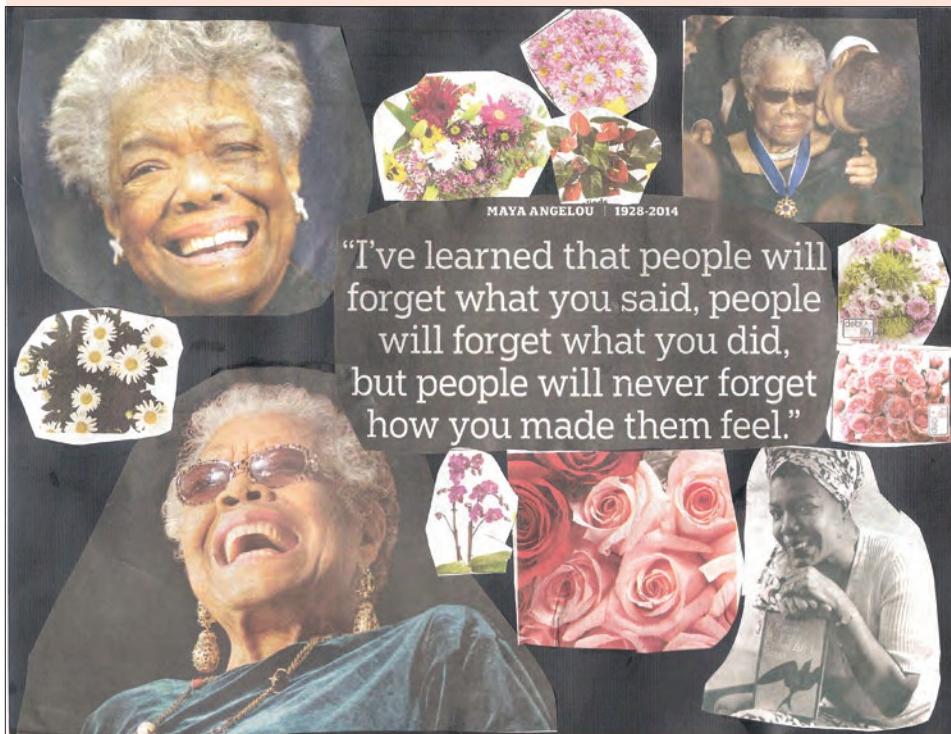
She will sorely be missed but she looks down on us and smiles. She says "I may be gone but my spirit will live on forever and ever. I'm in my great big mansion in heaven. I will write forever in my new home."

**"I may be gone but my spirit will live on forever and ever."**

She doesn't want us to cry. She wants us to smile and lift up our hearts and rejoice.

"Listen to yourself and in that quietude you may hear the voice of God," she says. "I had a lot of clouds but I have had so many rainbows in my clouds. Super Soul Sunday!"

Maya Angelou, you are the best. Sending love and kisses and a bouquet of flowers for your new home. Thank you for all the books you wrote and will be writing forever.



COLLAGE BY SYBIL TAYLOR

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## VENDOR PROFILE: SCOTT LOVELL

By Rachel Cain, Editorial Intern

When Scott Lovell was hit by two cars in the same day and lost half his leg, he decided to not look back on it as a painful experience, but instead to be grateful.

"It wasn't a bad day, because I'm still living. There are not going to be many people who were hit by two cars who are still alive," he said. "It was a good day."

This is just one example of Lovell's uncanny ability to find the positive aspects in any situation. He constantly thanks God for all the blessings in his life, even though, in previous years, it may have seemed such blessings were few and far between.

Lovell grew up in North Carolina in a middle class neighborhood. When he was six years old his father left his family, so he and his brother were raised by their mother and grandmother. Lovell credits his mother and grandmother for instilling him with strong morals from an early age.



"I was taught by my mom to treat others as you want to be treated," Lovell said. "My grandmother would pay for people on the bus, and my mom would give her shirt off her back to help others."

Then, at only eleven years old, Lovell began using drugs and alcohol. Years later, as he continued along this path, he landed in prison for his involvement in a drug deal.

Lovell's brother, mother and grandmother all passed away while he was serving his sentence. In addition to these painful losses, he now had nowhere to stay after he was released from prison.

After Lovell left jail, a pastor gave him permission to sleep in a church. Lovell remained at this church in Virginia for about 10 months before coming to DC.

Then, Lovell met who he refers to as his "guardian angel."

Lovell often slept outside the Verizon Center, where at least he could watch the Washington Capitals' hockey games on the jumbotron. One night as he was cheering on the team, a woman noticed him and notified Ted Leonsis, majority owner of the Washington Capitals. Leonsis came outside and invited Lovell into his private suite. There, he offered Lovell some pocket money, a hooded sweatshirt and a promise to pay his rent if he did not have a place to stay.

True to his word, Leonsis paid Lovell's rent until he was moved off a waiting list for an apartment.

"[Leonsis] came into my life at a crucial point. I may have been dead if he never got me off the street," Lovell said. "God put this man in my life to help me brush myself off."

Lovell's friendship with Leonsis not only helped him move forward by assisting him with finding a job and a place to live, but also supported him in moving beyond regret for past decisions.

"He told me to get out of the past," Lovell said. "He said you can't go forward while looking in the rearview mirror."

Today, Lovell has a home, steady work at a carwash and a job as a *Street Sense* vendor. After every issue Lovell makes sure to give a copy of *Street Sense* to his boss and to Leonsis. To Lovell, being a *Street Sense* vendor is more about standing on a corner and selling a newspaper. He calls himself a "street minister" because he builds relationships with his customers and teaches them and helps them learn from their experiences.

"People come to me with their problems," he said. "I tell them about my problems and help them deal with theirs."

Lovell's daily interactions with his customers make his day because he is able to make their days a little brighter. He makes sure to tell everyone to have a good morning, or good evening, or good weekend.

"It's very good for me to know I made someone's day just by talking and smiling," Lovell said. "I help my customers by being there. God wants us to be a blessing to somebody else."

Lovell always tries to remember to thank God for all the numerous blessings in his life, including his job, *Street Sense* customers, son, grandchildren and apartment. He recently looked out the window of his apartment and thanked God he no longer had to endure the hot and humid Washingtonian summers on the street.

"Right now I'm at peace and rest with everyday struggles," Lovell said. "It's a joy to be in my apartment. There's nothing like having your own place. Now I say Hallelujah!"

